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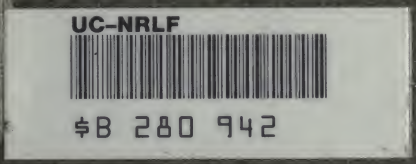

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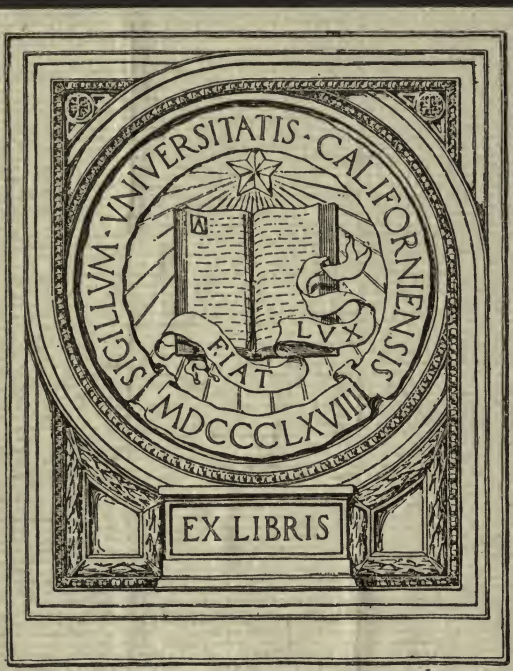
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BY

Rev. CHARLES H. VAIL

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INTRODUCTION.

Society is an organism and as such is constantly evolving new relations and bringing into the foreground new duties. There is nothing in all past history to correspond with the rapid changes now going on in the civilized world. These new conditions have brought us problems that command our most earnest attention.

Perhaps no greater question has appeared above the horizon of the industrial world than the relation of the government to the railways of the country. Shall the railroads be owned and operated as private or as public property? This is the point at issue. Believing with many others that public ownership is the only solution of the railroad problem, I offer in evidence of this position the following reasons for the faith which is in us.

I. Public Highways.

The Railways are Public Highways and as such, being necessary to transportation as a means of exchange, they should be owned and operated *by* Society in the interest *of* Society.

Highways are not private but public institutions, and when government lets out the construction of its highways, giving to corporate bodies the privilege of taxing those who use them, there is always retained a superintending power, a right to regulate the charges imposed upon the public. That the government has a right to prescribe rates has been so well established by judicial decisions that it is no longer a question for discussion. It is the duty of the State to provide inter-communication, and the chartering of a railroad by a private company is for the purpose of performing said duty for the State. Says Chief Justice Black:—"A railway is a public highway for the public benefit, and the right of the corporation to exact a uniform, reasonable, stipulated toll from those who pass over it, does not make its main use a private one. The public have an interest in such a road when it belongs to a corporation as clearly as they would if it were free, or if the tolls were payable to the State."

This fact is well stated by Mr. Stickney in the following language:—"Whoever builds or operates a railroad performs the functions of the government under a license or authority from the government." To quote an eminent Judge:—"Railway companies must be considered as trustees or agents of the State, entrusted with certain of its powers for the purpose of effecting particular objects coming within the legi-

timate ends of government. Upon no other theory is it possible to justify the imposition of taxes to forward the enterprise in which they are engaged, or the exercise by them of the right of 'eminent domain'."

This doctrine has been affirmed by the Supreme Courts of many states as well as by the United States Supreme Court, and may now be regarded as settled.* Such being the Nation's prerogative, why should not the Nation assume its duty directly, especially if its agents are found to be oppressing the people whom the government is bound to protect?

II. Analogy.

Every civilized country has found it necessary to own its own highways. Experience has shown that interests of such vast importance cannot safely be entrusted to private parties. The owners of property are quite inclined to use it to subserve their own interest. If the people would secure the benefits they must own the property. All the arguments in favor of placing other highways under public control, are as valid when applied to highways of iron.

James A. Garfield once said in Congress: "Since the dawn of history, the great thoroughfares have belonged to the people, have been known as the king's highways, or the public highways, and have been open to the free use of all, on payment of a small uniform tax or toll, to keep them in repair. But now the most perfect, and by far the most important roads known to mankind, are owned and managed as private property by a comparatively small number of private citizens." These "Corporations have become conscious of their strength, and have entered upon the work of controll-

* "The Railway Problem," A. B. Stickney, Ch., XVII. Appendix.
"Railways of Europe and America," Mrs. Todd, Ch., IX.

ing the states. Already they have captured some of the oldest and strongest of them; and these discrowned sovereigns now follow in chains the triumphal chariot of their conquerers. And this does not imply that merely the officers and representatives of states have been subjected to the railroads, but that the corporations have grasped the sources and fountains of power, and control the choice of both officers and representatives." These corporations "own our greatest highways and levy tribute at will on all our vast industries." Thus there is placed in the hands of few men the power of taxing the people as they please, and without explanation or representation. Such power no man or set of men should be permitted to exercise, for, "taxation without representation is tyranny." A small additional charge upon cereals means millions of dollars from the pockets of the farmers. We cannot afford to leave the property and the industrial interests of this country at the mercy of a few men who recognize no responsibility and no principle other than that of personal aggrandizement. As has been said, "Who ever controls the highways of a country is master of that country."

III. Accumulation of Wealth.

Many of the large fortunes of the last thirty years have resulted from the private ownership of our transportation system. The *Tribune* millionaire list of 1892 shows that the railways are one of the four chief causes of wealth congestion. The practice of watering stock and wrecking railways in order that they may be purchased at low prices, together with the general state of corruption connected with the private ownership of railroads, has been truly astounding. Mr. Loucks, in treating this subjects, has col

lected many statistics, among which is the following quoted from John Davis, M.C., which I give as an illustration :—"The government of the United States paid the company that built the Union Pacific Railway in Kansas 12,800 acres of land, and $16,000 per mile for building said road in the State of Kansas. The company report that they obtained $3.00 per acre for the lands. The total subsidy, then, was $54.400 per mile for building the road. This sum should have paid the cost of building and equipping the road about twice, and the road should have been turned over to the government as a public highway, free from incumbrance, to be operated in the interests of the people at mere cost of running expenses and repairs. This, however, is not the condition of matters. The com pany has retained the road as its own property, and has loaded it with a burden of stocks and bonds amounting to $105,454.78 per mile, on which the people must pay dividends and interest. These official figures are found in the annual reports of the board of railroad commissioners of Kansas, Vol. 1. and 7.

"They show that, after the general government has paid for building the Union Pacific Railroad in this state about twice its actual cost, the people must still pay interest and dividends on four times its cost for the privelege of using the road."

Governor Pattison's figures in the Minority Report of the United States Railroad Commission in 1887 show the most dishonorable dealings, and unparelled robbery on the part of railroad managers. For instance, the Union Pacific, which was built for $38,824,000 was capitalized at $109,814,812—a fictitious capital of $70,990,812.

The Central Pacific and Western Pacific added por-

tions, were built for $40,000,000 for which bonds and stocks were issued amounting to $124,211,680, making a fictitious capital of $84,211,680. His report is filled with similar facts and figures, evidencing the perfidy and dishonor connected with the six great railroad companies to which the government loaned its credit between the years 1865 and 1869. "The construction companies, or inside combinations that built five of the six roads have destroyed or concealed their books; the exception being the Central Branch, and the commission has been embarrassed in its work." But "from the minutes and accounts of the railroad companies and from fragmentary information gathered from various sources, it is disclosed that the officers of at least three of these companies made false statements under oath, in affidavits now on file in the Interior Department. From these affidavits the following has been compiled:

STOCK TABLE.

Company.	Stock actually paid in.	Stock paid in as sworn to.	Name of deponents.	Date of affidavids.
Union Pacific,	$400,650	$36,762,300	Oliver Ames.	Sept. 27-1870.
Kansas "	$250,000	$ 5,072,500	R. E. Carr.	" 28-1872.
Central "	$760,000	$54,283,190	L. Stanford.	" 18-1871.
Central "	$386,000	$ 980,600	R. M. Pomeroy	" 21-1869.
TOTAL	$1,796,650	$97,098,590		

Henry Clews, the noted Wall Street magnate, in *The Railway Age*, says, "The railways of the country are capitalized at probably fully 50 per cent. in excess of their actual cost." * Here is a prolific cause of vast fortunes. Such frauds upon the public have burdened the people with excessive taxation in railroad rates, that dividends might be paid on watered stock. Under public ownership there would be no stock to water.

* On Stock and Bond Inflation see Larrabee's "Railway Question," ch. vi.

The Post-Office is not troubled with stock manipulation.

IV. Corruption of Politics.

"Their (the railways) great wealth and power has made it possible for them to influence to a greater or less extent every department of the National and State governments. Their influence extends from the township assessor's office to the National Capitol, from the publisher of the small cross roads paper to the editorial staff of the Metropolitan daily. It is felt in every caucus, in every nominating covention and at every election. . . . . The large means at the command of railroad companies, their favors, their vast armies of employees and attorneys and their almost equally large force of special retainers are freely employed to carry into execution their political designs, and the standard of ethics recognized by railroad managers in their exploits is an exceedingly low one."*

In a report of the U. S. Senate Committee composed of Thurber of New York, Smidley of Iowa, White of Alabama, Dorman of Virginia and Moore of Illinois, is the following:—"It is in evidence that it has been the custom of the managers of the Erie Railroad, from year to year in the past, to spend large sums of money to control elections and to influence legislation.

"In the year 1868 more than one million of dollars was discharged from the treasury of this company for 'extra and legal services."

"Mr. Jay Gould, when last on the stand and examined in relation to various vouchers shown him, admitted the payments of large sums, prior to 1872, to Barber, Tweed, and others, and to in-

* "The Railway Question" p. 205.

fluence legislation or elections. These amounts were charged in the India rubber account. Mr. Gould, when interrogated as to the instances of his sending money for the purpose of controlling elections or influencing legislation, replied, 'that it would be as impossible for him to specify the numerous instances as it would to recall to mind the numerous freight cars sent over the Erie from day to day.'" *

The elder Vanderbilt boasted that he spent $60,000 in a short time at Albany for legislation which the Erie railroad desired, and that he got it. † Hon. Thomas V. Cator, who has made a careful study of the subject, says the corruption fund spent by the railroads of the United States amounts to $30,000,000 annually. ‡ No one doubts that, in most of our states, the railroads own the legislatures. J. D. Lawson, author of *Leading Cases Simplified*, warns the student not to pay much attention to the decisions of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. "The Pennsylvannia Railroad appears to run that tribunal with the same success that it does its own trains." Hon. J. B. Beck said in a speech in the U. S. Senate:—"It is impossible to have an honest legislature, State or Federal, so long as representatives are sent who owe their election to or are personally interested in great moneyed corporations or monopolies. No matter whether they call themselves Democrats or Republicans, they are not the representatives of the people, they are simply the agents or attorneys of those who seek their own aggrandizment by taxing the masses."

Mr. Gowen, President of the Philadelphia and Read-

*Page 556 of Report.

† "The Public Ownership of Monopolies," Prof. Parsons.

‡ "Rescue the Republic," Cator.

ing R. R., said to the Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives, in 1880:—"I have heard the counsel of the Pennsylvania Railroad Co., standing in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, threaten that Court with the displeasure of his clients if it decided against them."

Thomas V. Cator, in a valuable pamphlet quotes from a circular sent out by the New York Board of Trade and Transportation certain extracts, from which I take the following: "'The corruption of our elections, legislatures and courts—the undermining of the very foundations upon which our forefathers based our free institutions—the spectacle exhibited to the young, of chicanery and fraud conferring the highest prizes of society upon its most unscrupulous and unworthy members—these are features of our modern life which suggest in the strongest manner a future, if not a present, for our country, 'where wealth accumulates and men decay.'

"'If any are disposed to question the truth of this picture let them consider a few undisputed facts. It is not disputed:

"'That they (the railroads) control absolutely the legislatures of a majority of the States in the Union; make and unmake Governors, United States Senators and Congressmen, and under the forms of popular government are practical dictators of the government policy of the United States.'" The circular further states "'that this wealth and power has been acquired largely through bribery and corruption, ... that because Senator Thurman was active in compelling the Pacific Railroads to fulfil their contracts with the government, that honest man and able statesman could not return to the United States Senate.'"

And also, "Hon. David Davis, once a judge of the Supreme Court and a Senator of the United States, thus indicates the serious nature of the problem before us: 'The rapid growth of corporate power and the malign influence which it exerts by combination on the National and State Legislatures, is a well-grounded cause for alarm. A struggle is pending in the near future between this overgrown power, with its vast ramifications all over the Union, and a hard grip on much of the political machinery, on the one hand, and the people in an unorganized condition on the other, for control of the government. It will be watched by every patriot with intense anxiety.'

"We have indeed reached the hour foreseen by the prophetic Abraham Lincoln, when near the close of the war he said: 'It has been indeed a trying hour for the Republic; but I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of our country.'

"'As a result of the war corporations have been enthroned, and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the Republic is destroyed'

"'I feel at this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of the war,'" * A volume might be filled with similar testimony.

All of this vicious, corrupting influence in politics, which results from private ownership of railways, would be entirely removed by their nationalization.

*The authenticity of this quotations has been questioned, but its truth is evident.

V. Discriminations.

One of the greatest evils of private ownership is the discriminations between individuals, localities, corporations and communities. This evil assumes many forms. In the Northwest it has been the rule to refuse to furnish cars to track-buyers and farmers, thus compelling the sale of wheat to elevator companies.

Frequently railroad companies discriminate between dealers, building up one and ruining many. Before the United States Senate Committee of 1885, Mr. Wicker, a former railroad official, testified that "this discrimination, by reason of rebates, is a part of the present railroad system." This is plainly to be seen in the coal business. The favoritism in rates and rebates, and in the distribution of cars—a failure to furnish cars on some pretext, to certain companies, especially if they be rivals of those in which the railroad officials are interested—has been execrable. By this method the railroads have gained possession of most of the mines, so that there are today but few coal-fields of which they do not fix the output. But a few years ago, the Pittsburg Coal Company and many other shippers were ruined in this manner. It was proven in court that the Pittsburg Company, during one period of 564 days, could get only 2,371 empty cars, although the company had sale for, and capacity to produce and load, 15,000 cars. During this period the Rogers Company, in which some of the railroad officials were interested, received 15,483 cars.*

"Within the last thirty years 95 per cent. of the anthracite coal of America—practically the entire supply, it was reported by Congress in 1893—has passed

*Louck's "Government Ownership," p. 33.

from the ownership of private citizens, many thousands in number, into the possession of the railroads controlling the highways of the coal fields. . . . . 'Railroad syndicates,' says the investigation of 1888, 'are buying all the best bituminous coal lands along their lines in Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, and other Western States and Territories, no doubt with a view of levying tribute upon the people's fuel and the industrial fires of the country.' . . . The investigations by Congress in 1888 and 1893 both state that the railroads of the country are similarly becoming the owners of our iron and timber lands, and both call upon the people to save themselves. A new law of industry is rising into view. Ownership of the highways ends in ownership of everything and everybody that must use the highways. . . 'The railroad companies engaged in mining and transporting coal are practically in a combination to control the output and fix the price.' . . . . The anthracite collieries of Pennsylvania could now produce 50,000,000 tons a year. The railroads restrict them to 40,000,000 or 41,000,000 tons. . . . In the ten months between February and November, 1892, the price of coal in the East, as investigated by Congress in 1893, was advanced by the coal railroads as much as $1.25 and $1.35 a ton."* The extortion yearly by the railroad monopoly is about $40,000,000. This is on anthracite alone, and how many thousands of dollars on bituminous, it is impossible to know. This monopoly has been brought about by railroad discriminations. They have had it within their power,—by refusing to supply cars, and by charging excessive rates, so that all shippers but those of the

* "Wealth vs. Commonwealth," Lloyd, pp. 11, 12, 13.

company, would lose money on every ton marketed,—to compel private owners to sell their mines.

But not only in grain and fuel do we find this favoritism. It is also found in the meat business. "The most conspicious illustration is the present position of the four great Chicago firms engaged in slaughtering and marketing beef. Their present business was built up by rebates paid by the trunk lines, and each began as a sort of protege of one of the railroads. Now, with this immense business, by combining and throwing the bulk of it to one line, they have become dictators of rates to all the great railway corporations. These firms care but little what rates they pay, provided they are less than are granted to other shippers, so that they may continue to maintain their present practical monopoly." *

Perhaps the most glaring discrimination and unjust favoritism, was that in favor of the Standard Oil Company. Prof. Ely, in *Problems of Today*, speaking of this matter, says, "It obtained a monopoly through an alliance with the railways of the country, and this gave it special freight rates which no one else could secure. The report of the special committee appointed to investigate the railroads of New York in 1879 showed that the Standard Oil Company had received in rebates ten million of dollars in eighteen months. It was impossible for competition to stand up against such frightful odds." A certain railroad was found to be charging the Standard Oil Company but ten cents freight per barrel, while it charged every other shipper 35 cents per barrel, 25 cents of which was turned over to the Standard Oil Co. It was this alliance with the railroads which enabled this com-

*Stickney's "Railway Problem," p. 28.

pany to secure a monopoly. The rates charged Geo. Rice, the principal competitor of the Standard Oil Co., were from 100 per cent. to 300 per cent. higher. Can one conceive of anything in the commercial realm more outrageous! †

In these several instances which I have enumerated, we see that businesses have become monopolies by their alliance with the railroads. Railways are natural monopolies, and nearly all artificial monopolies have been created by some sort of a connection with a natural monopoly. Nationalize the railways—which would mean no favor—and artificial monopolies will largely disappear.

The discrimination between localities is also despicable. This is done by refusing to stop trains,—as on the Northern Pacific where the road ran through a town and built a depot three miles beyond, in order to enhance the value of land which belonged to the company; by building up a new town and destroying the one already established, and also by making war on localities through discriminations in rates.

Mr. Stickney, whose valuable book abounds in instances of discriminations, says in his introduction:—"This unrestricted power to discriminate in the matter of rates, lodged in the hands of one man, the manager of say five thousand miles of railway; the power, through malice, ignorance, or stupidity, to decree which out of say a thousand cities and villages located on his line should prosper, and which should not; which individuals out of say ten thousand merchants doing business in those cities and villages should make a profit or a loss,—and if it suited the autocrat's

†For full details see "Wealth vs. Commonwealth," also Hudson's "Railways and the Republic."

whim, the same man might be in favor one year and under the ban the next,—such enormous power over the fortunes of so many should never be lodged in the hands of any human being."

Mr. Stickney's book contains many diagrams illustrating the tariff schedules of railroads, showing rates, etc.. The diagram on page 68, giving the legal tariff in operation in the autumn of 1888, is of special interest. If one wishes to understand something of how the chaos of rates are, as he says, a result of chance, —for no ingenuity could have planned such a snarl,— he should study this diagram. For instance, it shows that the rates on flour and wheat are the same for 80 as for 420 miles; coal 200 as for 400 miles; coarse grain twice as much as flour, and on some classes one article is higher for 50 miles than the other, and vice-versa, etc., etc.. Now, in addition to this chaos, let one remember that at every town of importance men in all branches of business, are securing special rates, and one may realize something of the situation.

Another form of favoritism is the *Pass.* C. W. Davis, a railway auditor of experience, and also an executive officer having power to issue passes says :— "Fully 10 per cent. travel free, the result being that the great mass of railway users are yearly mulcted some $30,000,000 for the benefit of the favored minority; hence it is evident that if all were required to pay for railway services, as they are for mail services, the rates might be reduced 10 per cent. or more, and the corporate revenues be no less, and the operating expenses no more, . . By what right do the corporations tax the public that members of congress, legislators, judges and other court officials and their families may ride free? Why is it that when a legis-

lature is in session that passes are as plentiful as leaves in the forest in autumn?

"The writer, as an executive officer of a railway company having authority to issue passes, has, during a session of the legislature, signed vast numbers of blank passes at the request of the legislative agents of such company, and under instructions of the president of the corporation to furnish such lobby agents with all the passes they should ask for."

In the report of the U. S. Senate Commission, January 18, 1896, we find these words:—"Unjustifiable discriminations are constantly made between individuals . . and between localities similarily situated. . . The effect of the prevailing policy of railroad management is by an elaborate system of secret special rates, rebates, drawbacks and concessions to foster monoply and enrich favored shippers. . . Such favoritism and secrecy introduce an element into legitimate business that greatly retards the development of our industries and commerce." *

Prof. Parsons, after having cited the above in an article in *To-Day*, says :—"Public ownership would put a stop to excessive charges, discriminating rates, unjust rebates, favoritism, monopoly building, millionaire making, and all the other wealth congesting occupations of the railroads, and confine them to their proper business of carrying persons and things from one place to another. The post-office does not make millionaires, no Vanderbilts or Goulds or Rockefellers have come out of the public school system, or the fire department, or the weather bureau, but if they had been in private hands what mints of money would have been made through special contracts, exorbitant

* See Report of Senate Committee, pp. 180, 182.

charges, etc." Not only this, but government ownership would do away with all the gambling in railway stocks which now constitutes fully one-half of all the gambling in this country.

VI. The Remedy.

Public ownership, as has been said, is the only remedy for these evils. The government must own the railroads or the railroads will own the government. Legislative regulation has been tried time and again and proved futile. Take, for example, the Inter-State Commerce Law. The penalties of the law are severe enough, and its violation evident, but where are the convictions? The only one secured under it, was that of a shipper for discriminating against a railroad. And yet, Mr. Stickney, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the St. Paul and Kansas City Railroad, after quoting a president of a large railroad system, to the effect that, if all who have offended against the law were convicted, there would not be jails enough in the United States to hold them, says, "Probably it would be no exaggeration to say that if the cases were taken up and prosecuted to conviction in their chronological order, the man who was cautious enough to abstain from law-breaking, for say, two weeks, could go on from that time defying the law with impunity, as the docket would after that be so crowded that his case would not be reached during the remainder of his life."

But even if regulation could be made to succeed, it would not be preferable to public ownership. Regulation would not remove the root of the evil, viz., the antagonism between public and private interests. Regulation would still leave the stock holders to appoint their own managers, who in turn would, of course,

serve their electors. It is this antagonism of interests which constitutes the evil of monopoly. Regulation, instead of remedying, would only result in greater evasion of the law and corruption of its officials. Regulation would still leave the big salaries, costs of litigation, expense of commissions, enormous profits, high rates, low wages, poor service, stock gambling, evasion of taxes, watering of stock, disregard of safety, antagonisms of interests, long hours of labor, increased incentive to strikes, etc., etc..

No ! regulation is not the remedy. Public and private interests must be united, and complete harmony restored. Public ownership is the only solution of the problem.

VII. Method of Purchase.

Several ways of making the railroads public property have been proposed.

First—Bonds might be issued, and the roads purchased and operated for the benefit of the people, the receipts which are now used to pay dividends and interest on private capital being devoted to paying the interest and principal of the bonds. This is the way Wheeling, W.Va., purchased its gas works, and the city now owns her plant free of debt.

Second—Capitalists might form a syndicate to pay for stock and bonds. The roads, taken by "eminent domain," could then be leased to this syndicate under contract of good service and their return free of debt, within a given period. Springfield, Ill., has adopted this plan to obtain its electric light plant.

Third—Postal savings-banks could be established, and "receive deposits and loan on security at 1 or 2 per cent.—then it could buy the roads with the funds deposited or borrow the money at its banks at 1 per

cent. and the transaction would be in strict accordance with the principles of the bankers and financiers."* This last plan is recommended by Prof. Parsons of Boston University.

Many other methods have been proposed, but these, all things considered, seem to me the most fair. I am inclined to favor the first plan, inasmuch as government savings banks can not be established without much delay.

VIII. The Cost.

The question naturally arises here, What would be the cost of such an undertaking?

We have seen that the roads are capitalized at more than twice their actual cost. Surely, the government ought not to pay for property twice as much as it is worth. When we go to purchase a piece of land we do not inquire what it cost, or how much the owner paid for it twenty years ago, but, What is it worth to-day?

If the State needs a man's property, it inquires as to its market value, as to what property equally as good can be bought for to-day, and pays him that. If the property is worth but $1,000, the State does not pay $2,000, even though it may have been worth that at some former period. The law of "eminent domain" only requires the State to pay the actual cash value at the time of purchase.

What then is the actual cash value of the railroad system? There is no doubt but that the whole system could be replaced to-day for $20,000 per mile. In 1893 there were 175 508 miles † of railroad in this country, (including elevated roads) which, at $20,000 per mile,

* "To-day," February, 1896. "Arena," April, 1895.

† For statistics, see Poor's "Manual of Railroads," 1894-95.

would make a total cost of $3,510,160,000, and even this is in excess of the actual cash capital invested by the railway companies. The amount of bonds and interest granted by the National Government to the Pacific railroads is given by Mrs. Todd, in her valuable work, *The Railroads of Europe and America*, as $147,929,722.29. The amount of land donated by Congress, according to the *National Economist*, was 191,929,722 acres, which, at $5.00 per acre, would amount to $959,648,610. Add to this cash, bonds and stock bonuses from individuals, cities, counties, etc., at least an equal amount, and it is evident that the actual cash capital invested by these companies is not in excess of the $3,510,160,000. The total liabilities of the railroads in 1893, were $11,443,888,892. From this deduct $383,201,872 for current accounts, and we have $11,060,687,020 as the total capital investment, of which the capitalization, as we have seen, is considerably more than half water.

But suppose that we be generous and allow $25,000 † per mile, which, according to Gov. Larrabee, is a liberal estimate of the average cost of American roads to the stock and bondholders, and we have a total of $4,387,700,000. Now let us go still further, and be more than generous. Let the $25,000 stand for mere cost, per mile, of track and allow for equipment $360,120,000 for the 36,012 locomotives at $10,000 each; $100,000,000 for the 27,169 passenger cars and the 7,805 baggage and mail cars; $500,000,000 for the 1,161,282 freight cars, and we should have a total of $5,347,820,000. The interest of this at 3 per cent. would be $160,434,600. Of course, we shall be told that the Nation can never assume such a responsibility. Well, let us see.

† Thousands of miles have been built in recent years from $10,000 to $15,000 per mile.

We paid the railroads in 1893, $1,333,906 772 The profits of the railroad companies that year were $475,-880,041. We actually paid then the 160 millions and 315 millions besides. It is, therefore, perfect nonsense to say we cannot pay it, when we are paying it, and twice as much more, besides.

We could pay the $160,000,000, or even $200,000,000, and then make a profit of over $200,000,000 on the transaction. The dividends and surplus paid by the railroads in 1893, * according to their figures, amounted to $126,142,882.

IX. Economy of Public Ownership.

The savings to the people under public ownership would be enormous. Mr. C. W. Davis has estimated the economies of public ownership at $360,000,000, and in his account many items are omitted. Thomas V. Cator estimates that we could borrow the money, pay 2 per cent. interest on the loan, and at once save 520 millions out of the one billion dollars yearly paid the railroads.

Prof. Parsons computes the "Savings by dispensing with 599 out of 600 railway presidents with their costly staffs, a similar number of managers and staffs, 68 traffic associations, the whole army of commercial agents and lawyers, competing depots and uptown offices; savings by uniformity of rails, cars, etc, and the multitudinous adjustments, co operations and simplifications, that will result from consolidations, will figure, according to careful data, not less than $100,000,000 a year. The saving to the public from purer administration,—by abrogation of the pass evil, commissions, rebates and corruption funds, and by

* 1893 being an average year, it has been chosen as the basis of these calculations.

greater care in preventing accidents,—$90,000,000. The immediate savings in interest will be about 200 millions, so that the total savings will be 390 millions a year at once, and when the roads have paid for themselves, there will be a saving to railway users of the whole 400 millions that goes to railroad capital and the entire savings will probably then exceed 600 millions." *

As some may desire to have these items more specialized, I have compiled the following table from various authorities, especially C. Wood Davis, who is a railroad man eminently qualified to speak upon the subject:

ESTIMATES BY C. W. DAVIS †

Savings by—	
Dispensing with 599 presidents, with their staffs -	$25 000,000
Dispensing with high priced managers and their staffs	4,000,000
Abolishing attorneys and legal expenses - - -	12 000,000
Abolishing solicitors and officers, maintained off the regular lines, for securing competitive traffic - -	15,000,000
Consolidation of depots, officers and staffs - - -	20 000,000
The exclusive use of shortest routes - - - -	25,000,000
Abolishing 5-7 of the advertising account - - -	5 000,000
Abrogation of the pass evil - - - - - -	30,000,000
Disbanding traffic associations whose only duty is to adjust matters between competing lines - - -	4.000,000
Abrogation of the commission system - - - -	20.000,000

ESTIMATES BY PROF. PARSONS ‡

Uniformity of rail, cars, machinery, etc., cheapening their manufacture by avoiding freight blockades, return of empties belonging to other roads, clerkage to keep account of foreign cars and adjust divisions of earnings; by simple tariffs, saving time of public and clerks; by all the numerous little economies of a

* "The Public Ownership of Monopolies," p. 12.
† For basis of estimates see Louck's "Government Ownership."
‡April "Arena," 1895.

vast business under a single management with no competitive warfare to waste its energies - -	$15,000,000
Avoiding strikes and developing a better spirit among employees - - - - - - - - - - -	10,000 000

POOR'S MANUAL—1894.

Having no dividends, interest, rent, etc., to pay - -	445,078,840
Putting the surplus into the people's treasury - -	30,801.201

ESTIMATES BY T. V. CATOR.

Abolishing corruption fund - - - - - -	30,000,000
Abrogating unjust rebates, etc. - - - - -	50,000 000
Total saving by Public Ownership - - -	$740,880 041

In 1893 we paid the railroads $1,333,906,772, but the same service under public ownership, if free of debt, would have cost but about $590,000,000. This would enable a reduction of one half in the rate and still leave a profit. Even a greater reduction might be made, for the lowering of rates would be followed by increase of patronage which would greatly increase revenue. It costs but little more to run full trains than trains half full. If a road carries one million passengers a year, it can carry another million for one half what it costs to carry the first. If it makes 50 per cent. profit on the first million it will make 75 per cent. on the second ; or, if the first million are carried at cost, the second will yield 100 per cent. profit * Mr. Acworth says that, up to the full capacity of the railroad equipment, the cost of each additional passenger is not over one cent for 410 miles. † Herein may be seen the reason why, under public ownership, fares may be reduced not only to one-tenth, but even to one twentieth of their present rate.

*April "Arena," 1895.
†December "Arena," 1895.

It must not be forgotten that rates are now charged to cover *total* expenses. There is a wide difference between total expenses and operating expenses,—the former includes interest, dividends and profits. Again, we must distinguish between actual operating expenses, and expenses in which are included corruption funds, rebates, etc.

In 1890,* the railroads place cost of a ton mile at .6 of a cent, and a passenger mile at 2 cents. In round numbers there were 11,848 millions passenger miles and 76,207 millions ton miles. The total operating expense that year was, therefore, 693 millions of dollars. The railway returns show that 60 millions dollars of this amount were derived from mail, express, elevators, stockyards, car-mileage, etc.—their own proper incomes,—so that the actual operating expense chargeable to passenger and freight service was only 633 millions. Even this includes charges to cover rebates, commissions, corruption money, etc., amounting as estimated to $110,000,000. Deduct the 60 millions and the 110 millions, from the 693 millions of dollars, and we have left 523 millions as the actual cost of our present freight and passenger service. This would make the real cost of moving one passenger one mile, 1.2 cents, and a ton of freight, .5 of a cent.

Under public ownership, operating expenses would be reduced at least one third, or to 462 millions of dollars. Now, from this substract the 60 millions chargeable to express, mail, etc., and we have 402 millions. This alone, remember, would permit rates one-third lower than at present. Now, if the burden were

* See Inter-State Commerce Commission Report of 1890, p. 51. The report contains summary of 156, 404.06 miles of railway. The total number of miles operated that year was 163,420. I use the statistics of 1890 here so as to avail myself of the valuable table given by Prof. Parsons in the April "Arena" of 1895, which are based upon that year's report.

thrown on freight so as to relieve passenger travel—as many advocate—a uniform tariff of one half cent, per ton mile and passenger mile, might be established. This, in a year like 1890, would yield 440 millions of dollars, an excess of 38 millions over operating expenses, with a freight reduction of over three-tenths and a passenger reduction of over three fourths of the present charges.

The increase of traffic which would result from low rates would, in a few years, enable the establishment of a tariff of .4 of a cent per ton mile and .1 of a cent per passenger mile. If amount of freight only doubled and passenger travel increased, but four and one half times, this would give an income of 650 millions, which, with revenues from express, etc., would cover all expenses. Until the system is free from debt it would be wise to establish rates a trifle higher so that the income would pay cost of purchase.

That these estimates of increase are not too high may be seen by statistics from Austro-Hungary, where a reduction in fares of 40 per cent., in three years resulted in an increased traffic of 46 4 per cent. Although wages have been doubled in the meantime, and fares reduced, still the system yields more than 100 per cent. net, the operating expenses being less than one-half the income.*

Many roads in this country sell season tickets at but little over one-half cent a mile, which they would not do, if the custom resulted in a loss. Other roads sell season tickets at seven tenths of a cent a mile.

Of course, too, many roads have been built which were not needed. This is evident from the fact that one third of the railroads are in the hands of receivers.

* April "Arena," p. 228, note 3.

If these superfluous roads are excluded from our estimates, we will find that the average cost of moving one passenger one mile, with trains loaded as at present—forty-one passengers per train,—is about one cent: with the advantages of public ownership, it would fall below one-half cent. In Dorsey's *English and American Railways*, page 82, it is stated that the cost per passenger mile on such roads as the Pennsylvania is now about one-half cent. Where trains are well filled the expense is very much reduced. The cost of moving a passenger train one mile, according to railway reports, is eighty cents. In a train carrying 400 passengers then, the cost per passenger mile would be but one fifth of a cent.

This eighty cents per train mile includes all the expense of railway traffic, each train mile bearing its proportion of waste, corruption money, rebates, etc.

Now, according to these figures, what is the real cost of transporting passengers from New York to Chicago, on well filled trains? The distance is 913 miles, which, multiplied by cost per passenger mile, gives a cost of about $1.82, or for round trip, $3.64.

Again, the cost of moving a passenger train being eighty cents per mile, if we multiply this by the number of miles, 913, we get the cost of running a train from New York to Chicago, which is $730.40. Now, by dividing this amount by the number of passengers carried (400), we get the cost per passenger, $1.82. This, remember, is based upon the railroad companies own figures, and includes the pro rata share of labor, taxes, rebates, wear and tear, lobby fees, etc. It covers all expenses, and we may be sure, that their own published estimates of the cost of moving trains are not too low.

If the government owned the railroads we might go to Chicago and back for $2.00 or less. Do you say this is Utopian? Let us see. We have found that public ownership would reduce operating expenses one-third. This would bring cost per train mile down to about fifty-four cents, (.53 1-3) and the cost per passenger mile to a little over one tenth of a cent ($.00135).

Now, if we multiply the distance, 913 miles, by cost per train mile (54 cents), we shall have $493.02 as the cost of running a train from New York to Chicago. Divide this by the number of passengers (400) and we find the cost per passenger to be $1.23. Or, multiply the cost per passenger ($.00135) by the number of miles (913), and we obtain the same result. This would make the round trip $2.46.

But this is not all. These estimates are based simply upon the saving in operating expenses. If we add to this the many other economies which have been pointed out, it is not too much to say that the regular fare would be less than $2.00 for the round trip, while excursion rates need not exceed $1.00.

Not only this, but the economies of public owner ship would enable us to go by excursion from New York to San Francisco and return for a five dollar bill! Even the reduction of one third in operating expenses would bring the regular fare down to about $9.00 for the round trip, with trains fully loaded. Our estimate of one-third reduction (54 cents per train mile), is by no means excessive. English railway statistics show that the average expense per train mile is only forty-four cents, and on German Railways, under public ownership, the cost per car mile is already reduced below five cents; and this latter, notwithstanding the fact that Germany employs on the railways about double

the number of men per mile, that are employed in this country. Although larger wages are paid here, the difference is more than made up by the fewer men employed.

The German state road at Berlin sells yearly tickets, good for five miles' ride in and out of the city, on any train, for $4.50. This means 3,650 miles for $4.50, if the holder lives five miles out of the city and goes in and out once a day. If he goes twice a day it means 7,300 miles for $4.50. The passenger may travel more miles than from New York to San Francisco and return, and all for $4.50. Can we not do that which Germany is doing? The government pays the railroads about $275 for transporting a loaded postal car from Boston to San Francisco. A passenger car carrying 50 passengers at $10.00 each, would amount to $500, or a clear profit under our present management of $225. Does any one doubt that, under public ownership the excursion rate could be placed at $5.00?

In the December *Arena* of 1895, Mr. J. L. Cowles gives data of three excursions, which were run over the Cleveland, Canton and Southern Railroad, from Zanesville, Ohio, to Cleveland and return (286 miles), for 75 cents round trip—less than three-tenths of a cent a mile. Each train carries 700 passengers, making the receipts $525. per train. The cost of these excursion trains was but little greater than that of regular trains. But allowing $1.00 per train mile, instead of the 80 cents, the cost to the railroads was only one-seventh of a cent per passenger mile, and the profit was nearly 50 per cent.

Note.—These estimates are based upon train of 400 passengers. If trains carried from 600 to 800 the rate per passenger mile would be greatly reduced. Even at the German rate of five cents per car mile, sixty occupying a car, the cost per passenger mile would be reduced to .00083 1-3. This would make the regular fare from New York to Chicago seventy-six cents. Who doubts, then, that excursions could be run for fifty cents?

All this but evidences that which Sir William Galt proved before the Royal Commission of England some years ago, that full trains can be run for one-tenth of a cent per passenger mile.

Under public ownership it would not be too much to expect that the regular fares would be reduced to one-tenth of a cent per passenger mile, and probably would fall below that, while for excursions, the rates, as we have predicted, need not exceed one-twentieth of a cent per passenger mile.

It is not necessary for me to speak of the importance of cheap transportation. We all recognize travel as a mighty educator. Nothing tends, more quickly, to overcome prejudice and banish ignorance.

Economy and civilization call for public ownership.

X. Experience.

"Experience is the best teacher." We are always prone to look for precedents, and it might be well for us to inquire, What has been the result of public ownership in the fifty-four countries now owning their railway systems, wholly or in part?

In the first place, we notice in such countries an absence of the frauds, corruption, and monopolies, which grow out of our system. Official reports and the testimony of travelers show that the service is cheaper, safer, and more progressive than the service in this country.

Another important feature of public ownership is the revenue.

In Germany the net profits from government ownership in 1890 were $121,412,166.60. The average passenger fare is .0117 cents per mile, and the average freight rate is .0147 cents per ton mile. The net profits during the last ten years have increased 41 per cent.,

and wages are 121 per cent. higher than they were under private ownership. On third class fare one may ride four miles for one cent, and ten miles on the Berlin road for the same amount.

The reports of 1890 show that a surplus of 38.40 per cent. was collected in excess of what was needed to maintain the roads. Should it be deemed desirable to run the roads at cost, rates might be reduced 38.40 per cent. But as this reduction in rates would result in increased traffic, a surplus would still result even at this low figure.*

The experience of Belgium has been similar to that of Germany. Fares and freight rates have been reduced one-half and wages of employees doubled under governmental control. The net profits for 1891 were $11,313,175 38.

In New Zealand the government owns 1,886 miles of railroad, which paid in 1893 a net profit of $2,179,473. The profits which have accrued to the colony in cheapening transit are inestimable.

In New South Wales the government owns 2,351 miles of railroad, which paid in 1893 a profit of $9,565,868.40. The saving in public lands alone would more than pay the entire cost of the system.

In Victoria, with its population in 1891 of 1,140,405, there were 2,903 miles of railway owned by the government, which in 1892 netted $4,641,367.55. This sum in a large measure sufficed to pay all federal taxes. In 1890 the railroads carried 71,058,940 passengers. "Compared with population scarcely any country in the world carried so many passengers by rail as Victoria." The other colonies in Australia also bear important evidence for government ownership, but space

*Todd's "Railway's of Europe and America," p 41.

does not permit more specific mentioning. In Australia one may ride 1,000 miles, first class, for $6.50, and workingmen may ride three miles for one cent. Wages are from 25 to 30 per cent higher than in this country, and the working day is only eight hours.

In Natal, with a population in 1890 of only 543,913, the government owned 399 miles of railroad which netted in 1892 $810,357.40. The State was then building 100 miles more.

In Russia, in 1891, the government owned 6,824 miles of railway, and was building 893 miles additional, besides the New Siberian line, which will be 4,950 miles long. The net return to the government from the public railroads, in 1891, were $24,722,406. All private roads revert to the government after a period of from 37 to 85 years. Workingmen in Russia may ride 2,000 miles for $6.00.

In France the larger number of railroads are owned by private companies, but their charters stipulate that they shall revert to the government at the end of 99 years. The charters also require the railways to carry all mail free, also officers, employees of the government and soldiers, at very low rates. They also pay the state 10 per cent. of the gross receipts of passenger tariff and on freight carried on passenger trains. The government itself owns 3,643 miles.

In Austro-Hungary the railroad reports for 1888 show a total net income of $50,457,822. The average passenger fare is .01306 cents, and the average freight rate per ton mile is .01557 cents. †

These statistics are sufficient to show the financial advantage of public ownership. Experience, then,

†For full statistics see Vrooman's "Government Ownership" and "Todd's Railways."

favors nationalization. Prof. Ely informs us that, without exception, every man he met in Germany considered the test of experience as demonstration of the superiority of government ownership. Even those who were once bitterly opposed to the undertaking, are now convinced of their error, and no one wishes to return to private ownership.

XI. Public Safety Demands Government Ownership.

In every way the service under public ownership is superior to that under private control. Prof. Ely, in the *Congregationalist* of July 21, 1892, in speaking of the German systen, mentions the extreme solicitude on the part of railway managers for the safety of passengers. This is evident from the following table which I have prepared from the railroad reports of 1890:

Passengers Carried.	Killed.	Proportion.	Injured.	Proportion.
United States ... 492,430,865	286	1 in every 1,721,786	2,425	1 in every 203,064
Germany..... 426,056,250	46	1 in every 9,262,092	236	1 in every 1,805,323
Austro-Hurgary.. 68,638,938	4	1 in every 17,109,734	53	1 in every 1,291,300
Men Employed.	**Killed.**	**Proportion.**	**Injured.**	**Proportion.**
United States..... 749,301	2,451	1 in every 306	22,396	1 in every 33
Germany..... 340,553	454	1 in every 750	2,011	1 in every 169
Austro-Hungary. 166,463	156	1 in every 1,067	570	1 in every 292
Other Persons.	**Killed.**	**Injured.**	**Total Killed.**	**Total Injured.**
United States....	3,598	4,206	6,335	29,027
Germany..	226	205	726	2,452
Austro-Hungary..	163	110	223	733

Over nine times as many were injured, and over six

times as many were killed in the United States as in Germany and Austro-Hungary combined. Why is this? Simply because money is preferred to human life. Dividends are of more importance to the managers than the application of safety couplers, automatic brakes, and the proper guarding of crossings in cities.* Under public ownership safety would be the first consideration, all the modern appliances would be adopted, and men enough employed so that exhaustion through overwork would be unknown. It is this latter which is the direct cause of many disasters. It is six times as dangerous to be a passenger here as in Austro-Hungary, and eight times as dangerous as it is in Germany. It is four times as dangerous to be an employee here as in Germany and seven times as dangerous as in Austro Hungary. Not safety but dividends are the chief concern of private management of railroads.

"Public safety demands public ownership."

There are many other advantages to be gained by public ownership. For instance, the interests of the employees would be better subserved under government ownership, as the government always pays higher wages for shorter hours work than do private corporations. But lack of space forbids further consideration of this point.

It seems to me impossible for any unprejudiced person to absorb the facts already presented and not be heartily in favor of the nationalization of our railway system.

XII.—Objections Considered.

And now in conclusion, let us consider the objec-

*The report of June 30, 1895, shows that out of a total equipment of 1,306,000 locomotives and cars only 362,000 were fitted with train breaks and 408,000 with automatic couplers.

tions usually raised against public ownership.

1. "Under government ownership there would be less progress than under private ownership."

One need but glance at the postal service to see the fallacy of this proposition. The claim is well refuted by C. W. Davis, in the following words, "Instead of national ownership being a hindrance to improvement and enterprise the results in Australia prove the contrary, as in Victoria the government railways are already provided with interlocking plants at all grade crossings and one line does not have to wait the motion of another, but all are governed by an active and enlightened policy which adopts all beneficial improvements, appliances or modes of administration that will add either to the public safety, comfort or convenience." We find, also, that government ownership is superior to private ownership in the supply of transportation facilities. We learn from the Inter-State Commerce Commission of 1892 that for every 100 squares miles of territory, Great Britian, with private ownership, has 16.52 miles; France, 11.23 miles. The United States, 5.67 miles; Belgium, with government ownership, 28 71 miles. Of course, comparison with this country is hardly fair. But, compared with our best supplied states, New York with 16.19 miles, Illinois with 18.25 miles and New Jersey with 27.71 miles, and still Belgium holds the lead, having for its area more miles of railway than any other country in the world.

It may be thought that the cost of construction and operation of railways is less in the old countries than

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NOTE.—In the United States, for year ending June 30, 1893, the number of employees killed was 2,727; injured, 31,729; passengers killed, 299; injured, 3,229; other persons killed, 4,320; injured, 5,435; total killed, 7,346; injured, 40,393.

here, and that thus they can afford to have more miles. But this is an error. The cost of construction alone of European railways is estimated at three times as much per mile as in this country. Take the one item of right of way, here usually given to railroads. In England it costs on an average $20.000 per mile and in Belgium $11.000.* Also the cost of operation is greater in Europe, owning to the larger number of men employed. Although labor is cheaper across the Atlantic, the difference is more than balanced by the increased number of employees per mile, as the following table by Governor Larabee will show :†

Countries.	Number of men employed per mile.	Average wages paid per annum.	Wages paid per mile.
United Kingdom	18	$335	$6,000
Belgium.....	22	210	4,620
Russia.....	15	240	3,600
Germany	14	250	3,500
France.....	14	220	3,080
United States.....	5	555	2,625

As to the supposed insufficiency in speed, Prof. Ely negatives this idea which is often put forth by ill-informed persons. He says, "It is certain from calculations which have been made, that the average speed of German trains is faster than the average speed of trains in any other country on the continent. . . . . The fastest train from Berlin to Hamburg makes the distance in three hours and twenty-four minutes, with an average speed including all stops, of 52.28 miles per hour. This is faster than any train in the United States, and is, according to the *Engineering News*, the

* Larrabee's "Railway Question," p. 370.

† Ibid, p. 371.

fastest train in the world.* The fastest train from Berlin to Cologne, according to my official railroad guide, makes the distance in nine hours and five minutes, with an average speed of 39.6 miles per hour, a better rate of speed than that of the fastest limited between New York and Chicago, unless there has been an improvement since I last looked at the time tables of these trains. From Wiesbaden to Cologne I made 35.48 miles an hour, all stops included, and my average speed from Cologne to Bremen, likewise including all stops, was 40.86 miles per hour... It is very doubtful if in traveling north and south, east and west, in this country, one could make as good time."† In Governor Larrabee's book we find the following as to speed of trains, quoted from *Rall's Railroad Encyclopedia*, "Berlin and Brunswick line 45 1-2 miles an hour. Vienna and Buda-Pesth Railway 42 miles an hour. Paris and Calais Railway over 40 miles. Official reports give the average speed of express trains in Northern Germany 32.2 miles an hour, Southern Germany 28.8 miles, Austria 27.8. The average speed of express trains will certainly compare favorably with that of the United States."

As to efficiency, Mr. Jeans, a high authority, says that "the lines worked by the state are those kept in the best order, and the working of which gives the greatest satisfaction to the commercial world, and the public in general, as regards regularity of conveyance,

* The fastest regular trains in the United States for a short distance, are those between Washington and Baltimore, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Their speed being 53.33 miles an hour. The run from Washington to New York is made at the rate of 48.6 miles per hour. Since data furnished by the "Engineering News," the Empire State Express has been placed on the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, which runs from New York to Buffalo, a distance of 439 miles, in eight hours and forty minutes, making the rate of speed 50.7 miles an hour.

† "Congregationalist," July 21, 1892.

cheapness of transit, and the comfort of travelers."

2. "Our government cannot operate the railroads successfully."

It is somewhat amusing that such a claim should be made in the face of the fact that the government, through receivers, is now operating 25 per cent of the whole railroad mileage of the United States, and operating the same successfully. To such objectors the words of Walter Vrooman should be sufficient,— "We claim incompetency, and yet we boast that 'we are the greatest nation on earth!' that 'we are the people,' that 'we are the most ingenious in mechanism, the most fertile in resource, the most daring in method, and the most persistent in action.' And yet we can't run railroads! We can't prevent ourselves from being swindled out of untold millions every year! Where is our greatness to thus submit to all manner of imposition at far higher rates than paid in Europe, Asia, Africa or Australia?"

I believe we can do that which other nations are doing. In fact, *we are* doing it. In 1894, 43,000 miles of railroads were in the hands of receivers and thus were being run by the government.

3. "Public ownership would put the railroads in politics."

This objection might be a little more valid if the railroads were not already in politics. It is difficult to conceive how the railways could be more in politics than at present. This objection is only valuable as it serves to point out the need of a true civil service reform. Of course, the only danger in increased patronage, is because business and politics are not separated. If civil service were entirely separated from politics and placed upon a business basis, there could

be no danger from political patronage. The patronage capable of abuse by any party would be reduced to zero. If the railroad business were placed under non-partisan boards, with true civil service rules, it would be entirely removed from politics. Every industrial office should be a life position, subject to good conduct, with a right to have all removals tested in court. This done, all the trouble with patronage will be relegated to "innocuous desuetude." The public ownership of monopolies is in itself a tremendous influence in the direction of reform of the civil service. There is no way to compel the best men to take an interest in this reform and in public questions in general, like putting vast business interests into the hands of the government.

We have but to refer to Birmingham, Glasgow and many other European cities, in proof of this assertion. These cities were once enormously corrupt, but since the socialization of their natural monopolies they have become the best governed cities in the world. Glasgow was full of the worst sort of toughs, and its government was exceedingly corrupt until the gas plant, the street railway, tenement houses, etc., became public property. Then the best people said, "this thing cannot continue; it is getting too serious; altogether too much is at stake and we will not leave these corrupt politicians any longer in power." And they did not.*

No! Nationalization would not put the railroads in politics, but rather the contrary. To say that enlarging the sphere of the State would increase corruption evidences a failure to trace the cause of the evil to its source. The cause of corruption is private interest as

* "Philosophy of Mutallism," Parsons, p. 32.

opposed to public interest. Self-interest is the root. So long as private individuals can further their own interests at the expense of the public, there will be corruption. "The railroad lobby is the effect of which self-interest is the cause." Under public ownership there would exist no railroad interest as opposed to the public interest, consequently there would be no railroad lobby, as there is no post-office lobby. Public ownership would not only remove the opportunity, but also the incentive to corruption. It is the only remedy that will remove the railroads from political abuse, and from political corruption. It is not our public post-office which corrupts our legislatures, but our private railroads. Destroy this corruption power and give the government a chance to be honest.

In Australia, placing of the tenure of office under non-partisan boards has ended all complaints of abuse of patronage.

4. "It is unconstitutional."

Not so, however. Congress has a right to take the railways for public use either under the military power, or the post-road clause.

5. "It is not within the sphere of the government to operate railways."

Why not? Is it not as much within the sphere of government to operate railways as the postal service, or the weather bureau? Anything that is for the public good is within the sphere of the government. The government is but the agent of the people, the instrument in their hands to secure their ends.

As I have said, society is in a state of constant progress, and new relations and obligations are ever evolving. Society should respond to these new duties and gladly accept the wider responsibility. The let

alone policy means the lessening of interest in public life, and its consequent degradation. We are suffering to-day from extreme individualism. The lack of a sense of responsibility to public welfare is due largely to this cause. We have insisted on belittling governmental functions until indifference has taken a strong hold upon our best citizens. Is it not time to call a halt and inquire if we are on the right track? It is this blind application of *laisez faire* that is leading us on to social disaster.

6. "The cost of administration would be greater under public management."

This has been fully answered by showing the great economies of public ownership. Still, I will insert a table given by Mrs. Todd which is of great importance. The table shows the percentage of total working expenses expended on administration of the state and private lines.

Countries.	State Line per cent.	Companies Line per cent.
Germany	9.40	13.10
Austro-Hungary	6.50	8.47
Belgium	5.05	10.13
Denmark	6.89	5.77
France	16.16	9.58
Italy	6.49	8.76
Norway	7.30	7.00
Holland	5.30	10.35
Roumania	4.40	10.80
Russia	9.27	13.70

With the exception of France, which owns only the feeders to the great trunk lines, the above table shows the great economy in administration secured in most of the countries by public management of the railroads.

7. "The railways should be left to free competition."

As the railway business is a natural monopoly, it is not subject to successful competition. All such efforts end either in combination or ruin. Whenever competition is attempted it is simply a war—a struggle for mastery—and is certain to end. The history of the West Shore and Nickel Plate roads is a notable illustration. It is estimated that $200,000,000 was wasted in this experiment.

No! Competition is foreign to all natural monopolies. England is probably the best country in which to study the effect of competition on railroads. Prof. Cohn, the noted authority on English railways, has shown that the effect of competition, in every case, has been to increase charges. The whole tendency in railroads is toward combination and monopoly. Of the 40,000 railroad stations not more than 4,000 are junctions, and even at such the ingenuity of the managers has developed a system of "pooling" the traffic, so that rates at competitive points are now under control.

As such a business is non-competitive in character, the result of turning it over to private corporations could be naught else than harmful. 'The railway transportation under our present conditions is to the industrial world, what the atmosphere is to the physical world, it pervades and is essential to all industries."* Who would consent to allow a few men to dictate to him, upon what terms the air shall be breathed?

All these objections were heard in Prussia, before the government took possession of the roads, but public ownership has shown them to have been groundless. Prof. Cohn, of the University of Goettingen, voices the general sentiment when he says, that in

* "Railway Problems;" p. 81.

Prussia the question of state ownership and management of railways has been settled by the test of experience. †

Conclusion.

The trend of opinion in this country today is strongly in favor of government ownership. People are beginning to realize that the full benefit of the railways can only be secured by making them public property, owned and managed *by* society in the interests *of* society.

The rights of the people can no longer be obscured by false issues. The "innocent shareholder" and the "widow and orphan" plea have done excellent service in the past for unscrupulous men in the perpetration of their schemes. It is often said that the recovery of all the peoples property which has been fraudently obtained would, in many instances, work hardship. Perhaps, in a few cases, this may be true. But for everyone who would thus suffer there are now thousands who suffer. Are not the interests of the majority to be looked after? Shall we continue to leave a few innocent people in possession of stolen property while the rights of the multitude are neglected?

That which is needed in this country is a public spirit that will protect public property. When this spirit has been aroused we need fear no aggression of anarchism. There will be little difficulty in protecting the really innocent shareholder. Civil and criminal remedies would be very wholesome. If our government should begin at once a real defence of public rights, people would be more careful in their investments, and make needful inquiry regarding the acqui-

† "Socialism and Social Reform;" Ely, p 288.

sition of the stock offered for sale. If any of the dependent classes suffer innocently through the estab lishment of public justice such could easily be indemnified, either by public or private offerings.

This plea, however, has practically no bearing on the question under consideration, although it has often been made to do service in this connection. The truth is, the stockholders of railroads have suffered nearly as much as the public at the hands of railroad managers. Their perfidious relations is a wound in the commercial world.

Let no one be deceived or diverted from the issue by clap trap arguments. That all the railroads of the country ought to be under one management is acknowledged by as high an authority as Mr. C. P. Huntington. The only question then, is, shall this management be national or corporate? In behalf of national ownership, I have submitted the foregoing. My concluding word is, if you are convinced that pub lic ownership is the true solution of the railroad problem, evidence your faith by your works. Let each do his part in a campaign of education, that this much needed reform may be speedily consummated.

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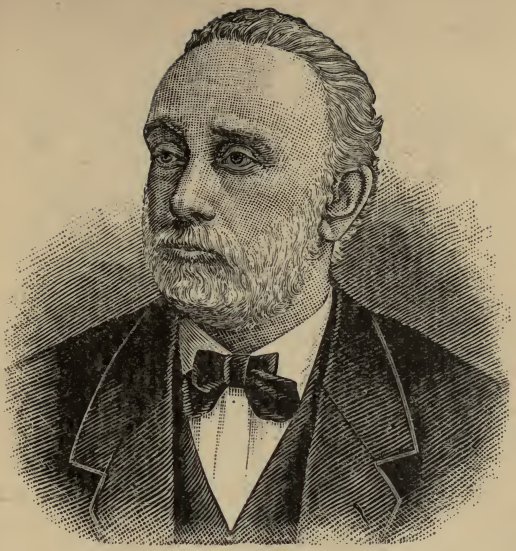

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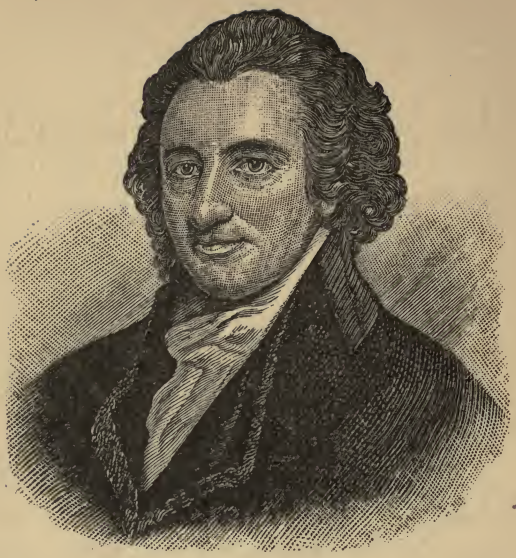

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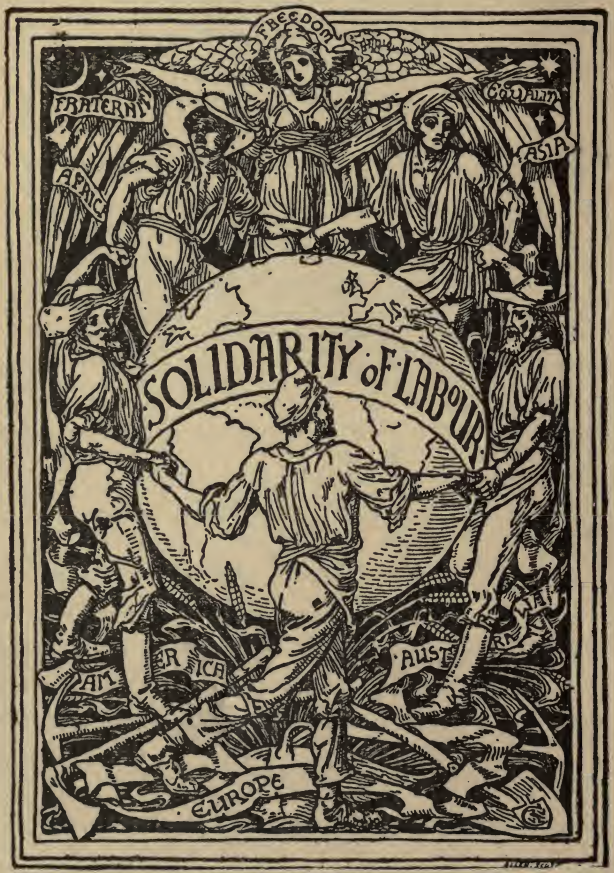

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